

the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Robert Lee Pitman, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Texas?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON SCHROEDER NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Robert William Schroeder III, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Texas?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON AZRACK NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Joan Marie Azrack, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON DILLON NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Elizabeth K. Dillon, of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Virginia?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON BIGGS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Loretta Copeland Biggs, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of North Carolina?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business for debate only, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 5701

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 5701, which is at the desk; that the bill be read three times and passed; and that the motion to recon-

sider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator SESSIONS, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, this objection is very unfortunate. The Oregon congressional delegation has teamed up in a bipartisan way to provide, among other things, trust land for the two remaining Native American tribes in our State that have no land base. These tribes have been waiting for over 100 years, and Senator MERKLEY and I, with the whole Oregon congressional delegation, intend to be back early next year working to pass these bills and stay at it until justice is done.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 4137

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, also on behalf of Senator SESSIONS, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4137; that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. WYDEN. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I want to be clear, as chair of the Senate Finance Committee, that I oppose taxpayers subsidizing illegal conduct, and I also oppose setting up a one-size-fits-all Federal mandate that is going to create redtape and confusion for our States to implement.

This proposal says that TANF electronic benefits cannot be used in any retail store which sells marijuana. This means that a TANF card cannot be swiped in these locations. The reality is that TANF benefits can be withdrawn for cash, and cash can be spent anywhere. Yet this proposal does not seem to recognize that fact.

Of course, we here in the Senate often hear of burdensome Federal rules and regulations that are imposed on our States and our businesses. My view is this sounds like the epitome of needless bureaucracy in its current form and actually achieves nothing except generating a lot of regulatory hassle.

For the reasons I have stated, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 1898

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I came to the floor last week to ask a simple question: Who does this government work for? Does it work only for the billionaires and the biggest corporations or does it work for all of us?

I asked that question last week as Congress considered the government funding bill—a bill that included a completely unrelated provision literally written by Citigroup lobbyists that increased the risk of future taxpayer bailouts just so the biggest banks in this country could rake in more profits. Sadly, that bill was just the latest example of how the government works just fine for those who have already made it.

In the past few years, Federal agencies have entered into a number of major settlement agreements with big banks and other large corporations after those companies have broken the law. These agencies have touted these settlements as being worth millions or in some cases billions of dollars. That sounds like a great deal for taxpayers, but often that sticker price is much higher than the actual value at the settlement. Agencies have often permitted corporations to deduct the cost of the settlement from their taxes, which can cut the actual value of the payment by more than 30 percent. And instead of requiring corporations to actually pay the full settlement amount, agencies often give corporations credits toward the settlement amount for taking certain actions—actions the corporations would have taken even if the settlement had never existed. By structuring the settlements this way, agencies can get credit for being tough on corporate wrongdoers even when the actual deal paints a much different picture.

In January I introduced a bill with Senator COBURN to shed more light on this kind of backroom dealmaking. This bipartisan bill, the Truth in Settlements Act, is pretty simple. It just requires Federal agencies to publicly disclose certain basic information about the major settlements they enter into with corporations—information such as whether a settlement is going to be tax deductible or whether it lets companies claim credit for things they are already doing. That is pretty much it.

The idea behind the bill is straightforward. If the government is going to cut deals on behalf of the American people, the American people are entitled to know what kind of a deal they are getting. That is the only way the public can hold agencies accountable.

The Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee approved the Truth in Settlements Act in July without any objections from any Democrats or any Republicans. The CBO found the bill wouldn't cost taxpayers a single dime. This is a non-partisan, commonsense measure that simply brings more transparency to